

## ADAT, ISLAM, AND THE IDEA OF RELIGION IN COLONIAL INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Based on some early anthropological accounts, people understand adat as any traditional practice: including visiting graves and forest, belief in supernatural powers, and other rituals and ceremonies. Practically speaking, people have not differentiated between the term adat and the encompassing traditions, customs, laws, and others. However, the discourse of religion has influenced the comprehensiveness of the idea of adat. This paper describes the construction of adat through the colonial period, a time dominantly influenced by the discourse of religion. I argue that the colonial construction of adat has strongly impacted religion in Indonesia. Adat which became a contested term and used by the rulers has declined the religious dimension of adat. The construction of adat and the disposition of adat from religion was influenced by various factors including colonial policies. This paper identified three dominant discourse of adat as political construction in colonial Indonesia: firstly, adat as animism was considered as the practices which are not religious, uncivilized and primitive; secondly, the mainstream of adat law has concerned on the secular aspect of adat while neglected the religious dimension of adat; thirdly, the construction of adat as not religion subsequently strengthened the Islamic identity and stressed the adat as opposed to Islam.*

**Key words:** Colonialism, Adat, Religion, Islam.

### INTRODUCTION

Various research has been done on *adat* and religion, however many of these studies have accepted the concept of *adat* and religion without criticism. These studies generally distinguish between *adat*, religion, culture, and tradition (Prasojo, 2013), even though there is no such thing in *adat* and religion as a

lively practice (Bowen, 2003). In the Minangkabau community, people do not distinguish between practices referred to as *adat* and religion. For instance, the modern day practice of *adat* and Islam in Minangkabau shows that they do not even distinguish between the two. How the Minangkabau traditional practice perceive their *adat* includes law, morality, customs, etiquette, ceremonies, dress, art, songs, and dances as well as pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist and Animistic Beliefs (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann, 2013). Despite a large number of both historical and anthropological works on the discourse of *adat* and religion in Indonesia, a number of questions remain concerning Indonesian indigenous-state relations. This paper intends to problematize the idea of Islam as religion through historical construction of *adat* in Indonesia. This paper focuses on efforts to trace the idea of *adat* in the colonial political construction that has invalidated the religious dimension of *adat*.

To look at the colonial construction of *adat* and its impact on religion, I will use the genealogy theory of religion, which has been reified through history. The word “religion” is rooted in western essentialism towards the idea of monotheistic tradition. Smith mentions that religion was reified in modern history in the Christian tradition in the West in the 17th century. Historically, what was initially called religious (*religio*) in the first century has been disqualified since the term religion was taken over by Christianity (Smith, 1962). The reification process occurred because of the dominant power in the church that separates the tradition of a perverted Christian community without it being considered heretical. Consequently, whoever practices beyond this limitation will be labeled as a pagan, an infidel, a heathen and so forth. Based on this concept, the world religion paradigm sees religion as a practice which requires the hierarchical relation between God, humans, and nature. In addition, religion is rooted in the concepts of “belief” which become the dominant ideology and simultaneous suppression of traditional cosmology (Asad, 1993). In addition, he conceptualizes religion as a constructive term derived from colonial Europe in order to complement the ideological and political agenda where capitalism could thrive. The product of the discourse of religion is the essentialization of the world religion paradigm.

In the context of Indonesia, the idea of religion as historical construction can be analyzed through the construction of Islam as religion. Based on this theory, I would like to find the historical contingencies of *adat*, where *adat* developed as a conceptual system. *Adat* is neither a descriptive nor an analytical term, but a prescriptive and normative one. *Adat* is a point of contention between different sets of actors. *Adat* just like other folk categories (*religion, din, mana, tao, dharma, agama*) should not be taken as a conceptual tool, but ought to be

the object of analysis instead (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann, 2013).

This paper is based on the concept of religion as a way of relating: how human beings relate to their fellow humans including the living and the dead, and other beings: animals, plants, forests, mountains, rivers, and invisible beings such as gods and spirits. I argue that religion is from the perspective of indigenous religion paradigm (Maarif, 2012). Religion includes many aspects of everyday life. As an everyday practice, religion in which people relate to “others” encompasses elements of everyday life including politics, economics, agriculture, rituals, and more (Maarif, 2012; Pati & Ma’arif, 2016). Based on this understanding, I argue *adat* as religion encompasses the cosmological characteristics of indigenous religious practice, which also has an intimate connection between land, sacred places, their knowledge, and also the rituals they continue practicing. Furthermore, from the perspective of indigenous religion, understanding *adat* can be also considered as religion which encompasses whole aspects of practice, habit, and tradition that are consciously practiced in society.

#### **ADAT AS “TRADITIONAL” PRACTICE**

We do not know when Indonesian people started using the word *adat* in the sense of “traditional practice” or when they actually chose to label their own traditional practice as *adat*. It seems that *adat* developed along with the beginning of the influence of Islam in the archipelago. As a daily practice, *adat* has been predominantly known by Muslim societies (Crawford, 1820; Marsden, 1811; Pires, 1944; Raffles, 1830).

It is worthily considered that the sources that explain this traditional practice have been noted by Western scholars during the colonial period. Here, I use ethnographic examples from Sulawesi to show where the supernatural/natural distinction misled Europeans trying to understand and portray a pre-colonial Indonesian cosmology. Aragon’s account of pre-colonial traditional practice of the people in Tobaku highlanders is an apt example. As he writes:

*“Before Dutch colonial intervention in the early 1900s, the social world of Tobaku highlanders in Central Sulawesi included recently deceased relatives (kiu), deified ancestors (anitu), spirit ‘owners’ (pue’) of resources such as land, and dangerous beings in the forest (seta) who were best avoided or appeased with offerings. These beings, however, were not usually mysterious to Sulawesi people. Villagers could explain their basic habits, specify the human transgressions that elicited retribution, and note empirical signs (sounds, sightings) of their perceived existence. When misfortunes occurred, people usually had a good idea what was amiss,*

*and who had erred. If there was any doubt, a religious specialist (tobalia) was asked to intercede and determine the causes and solutions. In short, while dead relatives and 'owners' of the land were recognised as different in their abilities from living villagers, they were not seen as transcendent (one Western connotation of 'supernatural') but, rather, immanent and interactive in a seamless cosmos. In the pre-Christian Tobaku cosmology, many powerful entities are understood the way we understand the moon's periodic invisibility. Even though the moon often cannot be seen by day, we still know it is there. Additionally, beings that appear differently to Tobaku people under different circumstances are analogous to our understandings of chameleons, or caterpillars and butterflies, which appear variously according to environment or during different life stages. For example, angry ancestors in Central Sulawesi can appear as rats and consume an entire crop planted by their descendants who transgress ancestral rules of behavior. The transformation of living relatives into ancestor spirits into rats is never portrayed as miraculous or 'not natural'; rather, these transformations are the way of the universe. In short, the natural vs. supernatural distinction corresponds to no indigenous categories in the Tobaku area or, probably, in the entire Indonesian region (Aragon, 2003: 133).*

Regarding some of the practices described, it shows that in the past, people had their own practices and traditions. However, various traditions and beliefs as a fixed category referred to as religion, culture, tradition and customs in the archipelago. The traditional practices of the people covering all elements recognized as a daily activity by the community. As stated by Tylor in *Primitive Culture*, all of the human activity or traditional practice of the ancient people considered as culture includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor, 1871:1).

It would appear that it has been a long time, the people of the archipelago have practiced their traditional practices. Sometimes, the people had no reference to each category in terms of definitions, perspectives, and as a normative concept until the coming of the western conception long after the period of pre-colonial. *Adat* included any practices of Indonesian society in the pre-colonial period encompassing tradition, custom, and practices developed at that time. People called those as *adat* as well as they called it as tradition, religion, customs, and so forth. In this sense, I argue that such practices of pre-colonial tradition are called traditional practice. However, it does not mean refer to old practice but used as the strategic essentialism to identify the people's practices at that time.

## ADAT AND ANIMISM

In the early 1800s, the Dutch held control of almost the entire archipelago. In the beginning, the discourse on *adat* related to the enactment of customary law applied to the Indonesian people. Contextually, such customary law was not contrary to public or social interests (Soekanto and Soekanto, 1981; Sudiyat, 1985; Wiranata, 2005). Between 1830 and 1870, it was known as Forcing Cultivation (*Cultural Stelsteel*). This policy was in the hands of Governor Van den Bosch who was authorized by King Willem. The Dutch colonial and economic policies gained momentum in weakening village communalism in Indonesia and stifling traditional power.

After forty years of colonial occupation in Indonesia, people's lives were significantly impacted, specifically with the decline in social life as a result of economic stagnation, crop failure, livestock disease, and starvation (Gouda, 1995; Kodoth, 2002). As a criticism of previous policy, the Dutch government began to formulate a policy that was oriented towards the private interests of colonists. It was issued as the Liberal Policy of 1870. This policy can be considered as a more moderate policy and began to shine attention on the interests of the colonies. This momentum initiated interest from many Dutch people into local people's lives. They began to require research regarding laws and traditions of the people. On the basis of this interest, the strengthening of colonial attention to its colonies led to the Dutch concern in regulating the laws regarding land. The laws that were quite influential at this time were related to the rules regarding agrarian law.

In 1870, it was known that this liberal period gave the capitalists entry into space in the economic heart of rural farmers (Benda, 1958a). An important moment began with the birth of the Dutch Agrarian Law in 1870. This law adhered to the principle of the *domain verklaring*, confirming state ownership of customary land (Rachman, 2011). The Agrarian Law of 1870 declared that all land that could not be proven to be individual private ownership, based on Western colonial law, was to be considered a domain of the state, called "state land." Based on this law, various concessionary rights for plantation/estates were given to foreign corporations for operation on lands claimed as state-owned property.

Various tendencies gave space to the Dutch to begin intervening in the social life of the community. Entering the 19th century, the deepening of colonial penetration started the first religious mission in the Dutch East Indies. The spread of liberal colonialism in the 19th century prompted the government to deeply introduce more information about the Netherlands culturally and politically. In 1870, new administrators came to power influenced by socialism and idealism, along with

the reorientation of religious-based political parties. In 1888, the position of the old conservatives was replaced by the power of an alliance between the anti-revolutionaries, the Calvinists, and the Romans who were narrower than their old allies, the liberal party, who later formed a new Christian party as the right wing to confront the left-wing secularist group (Furnivall, 1944). This period was later known as the period of Dutch Ethical Policy.

In the early 20th century, Ethical Policy was promoted by right-wing politicians in the Netherlands. Ethical Policy was marked by the victory of the right wing of liberalism in the Central Government of the Dutch East Indies. The Christian party gained power. Around this time, various policies became colored with a spirit of love or religious zeal. The Indies Government also began to position itself as a defender of moral responsibility (Furnivall, 1944). With the spirit of moral responsibility, Queen Wilhelmina conveyed the Dutch debt and ethical responsibility to the people of the Indies in her annual message. This Ethical Policy was then realized in three policies, namely *educatia* (education), *irrigaties* (irrigation) and *emigratie* (migration) (Niel, 1960). The Ethical Policy highlighted the need to make native welfare the main concern.

The importance of *adat* in the Dutch colonial political discourse began to strengthen from the beginning of this Ethical Policy. Various patterns of Dutch politics encouraged the dynamics of the construction of *adat* in this colonial period. This Ethical Policy was closely related to the interests of the Dutch to control their colonies. Francis Gouda has linked Ethical Policy with the emergence of social liberalism along with the social policies which were won by social liberalism in the Netherlands (Gouda and Zaalberg, 2002). Gouda discovered an Ethical Policy as an initial mission to promote culture in the days of the colonial government. At this time, culture became more prominent as a policy field (Gouda, 1995). Beside the cultural policy, religion as a part of people practice also became a more dominant concern.

Several indigenous research projects were initiated at this time. The research on *adat* equips the colonial state with categories and own knowledge that was used in running the government (Jones, 2013). At this time, *adat* was defined in the Encyclopaedia of the Dutch East Indies as a habit and practice that guides every aspect of indigenous life: social relations, agriculture, care, sick people, judicial arrangements, ancestral worship, burial of dead people, popular games and entertainment, etc.” At a glance, this concern for colonized people shows that the Ethical Policy was involved in many aspects. This Ethical Policy gave rise to the idea of defining *adat* as part of a cultural project. However, the far-reaching impact of this Ethical Policy also involved other



aspects, especially initiation to manage with a more civilized approach.

The backdrop of this transformation was the Ethical Policy initiated by the Dutch government and carrying the banner for the improvement of native people's welfare, the promotion of Christian missions, decentralization, and the expansion rule over islands outside Java (outer possessions) (Risa, 2014). At that time, Dutch Colonial Administrators nurtured optimism by eliminating the pernicious influence of Islam by spreading Christianity instead. Obviously, the Dutch government looked upon the presence of missions in the Indies with complication. On one hand, European mission societies were permitted to proselytize non-Muslim populations as a means to curb the advance of Islamization. On the other hand, Christian proselytization remained forbidden in Muslim areas, for fear of arousing anti-colonial sentiments.

The inclusion of this religious mission brought new hegemony in the religious tradition that developed from colonial rule in the Netherlands at this time. Religion, as a whole, brought by these missionaries became problematic. New categories began to differentiate the status of the people based on their beliefs and traditions. Here, a missionary and an anthropologist, Albert C. Kruyt has contributed to spread the idea of animism. Through his studies on local people in Sulawesi, Kruyt replaced the pejorative term *alfuru*, previously used to describe the non-Christian, non-Islamic islanders of the eastern half of the Dutch East Indies. Kruyt identified the religion of the highlanders as animism and produced a number of theoretical works that placed it within a wider evolutionary framework. Kruyt differentiated the Islamic coastal peoples from highlanders on the basis of their religion even though they both shared many of the same animistic beliefs. Kruyt's definition of animistic religion necessarily placed Christianity and Islam as its standard ideal of what so called as religion (Kruyt, 1906).

Kruyt's position can be considered as an important momentum in influencing the colonial administrator on understanding of traditional practices of people. Through the idea of animism, Kruyt understands religion as a set of rules originating from the idea of the existence of God. Kruyt's original contribution to the debate was made in a lengthy comparative study called *Animism in Indischen Archipel* (1906), published just after the military incorporation of Central Sulawesi in the Dutch East Indies. It is combined with Wilken's two paradigms, linking the four stages of social evolution to a parallel religious evolution from pre-animism to animism to spiritism to Christianity. Kruyt defines elements of traditional religion as "animism", namely belief in the soul. For animists, like the Toraja people, Kruyt proposed conversion to Christianity as a form of progress.

This generalized view of animism with local beliefs was rapidly strengthening at this time. Not only in Torajam but also in other areas, animism was an increasingly popular term referring to practices that are commonly believed in some contexts of society. Van Dijck states:

*“Animistic beliefs were still widespread and shamanism was generally practiced. Also, Buddhist and Hindu notions, introduced from Java, had not lost their attractiveness. Observance of Islamic rules and obligations was low, and, as we shall also observe elsewhere, those religious Islamic officials who did function in Minangkabau society had only a poor knowledge of Islam” (Dijck, 1984:9).”*

Therefore, the domination of world religion introduced by Kruyt at this time confirmed the position of *adat* which was increasingly separated from religion. In the dominant discourse, the practice of *adat* was no longer considered to have a religious dimension. Discursively, in the context of the above policy, revitalization of *adat* was thus interpreted as an effort to modernize and Christianize *adat*. Some post-colonial perspectives place Christian conversion in the colonial period as antithetical to the “real” religion of indigenous inhabitants. In this momentum, defining *adat* as secular was needed for missionaries to intervene and Christianize *adat*.

Because of the emerging idea of animism which regards *adat* as primitive, tribal, and uncivilized, *adat* as identical with animism shows no element of religion. *Adat* is regarded as an old tradition that was inherently integrated in society before Islam. Islam was always opposed to *adat*. It also impacted the product of some scholarly literatures which mention the traditional practice of Muslim people. For instance, when *adat* was used as a new category, *adat* basically should be interpreted in other terms which are considered parallel such as *abangan* in Java society. The term *abangan*, on the one hand, it was often categorized as a variant of Islam (Ricklefs, 2012). In Java, according to Ricklefs (2012), in the period of the 19th century, several Dutch historical sources identified differences in the practice of society, including the practice of *abangan* and *putihan*.

#### **ADAT AS NOT RELIGION AND DISCOURSE OF ADAT LAW**

Attention among the colonial people at this time was related to legal affairs and legislation which came to be known as *Adat Law*. In an effort to formulate *Adat Law*, colonial administrators faced initial polemics about the relationship between *Adat Law* and religion. The initiator of *Adat Law* in the early days accepted the categorization formulated by Van den Berg, known as his theory



of *receptio in complexu*. Van den Berg and others took an extreme position when they held, “it is generally accepted that the family and inheritance law of the population of Java and Madura who have accepted the Islamic faith is governed by Mohammedan law (syara’)” (Berg, 1892). Van der Berg maintains the view of Islamic law with deviations so that it was not “Indonesian law with irregularities.” In this case, the concept of *Adat* Law is the same as religious law.

The polemic context for *Adat* Law above shows initially, there was no clear consensus regarding the connection between *adat* and religious law. In the theory of *reception in complexu*, Van den Berg stated that *Adat* Law was the same as religious law. This meant asserting that *adat* and religion are not separate. *Adat* law was part of the religious law itself. This polemic about *Adat* Law was characterized by problems in defining religion and *adat* that have not been completed. The theory of *reception in complexu* was opposed by Van Vollenhoven. According to him, from the beginning, people had distinguished between *Adat* Law and religious law. Therefore religion and custom were separate. *Adat* that were widespread were then drawn by the legal element. These legal elements are also distinguished from Islamic law. Therefore, Vollenhoven often mistakenly views that *adat* and religion are the same (Vollenhoven, 1918). Vollenhoven believes that the *adat* in question was *adat* which has legal consequences. According to the historical account, Vollenhoven basically continued the tradition of *adat* studies which had been initiated by Snouck Hurgronje in *de atjehners* (Benda, 1958a). Therefore, Van Vollenhoven called this *Adat* Law the term *adatrecht* (Vollenhoven, 1918). The initiative carried out by Van Vollenhoven was caused by the difficulty to separate between *adat* and law. So as to make it easier to find *Adat* Law categories, an attempt was made to recognize *adat* with legal consequences and separate it from *adat* without legal reasons. Van Vollenhoven first initiated the term *adat* in 1901. *Adat* as the science of *adat* Law first began in the early 20th century and when the Dutch government had an interest in carrying out Ethical Policy.

Van Vollenhoven deserves to be appreciated for his efforts to maintain *adat*’s legacy. Van Vollenhoven’s efforts were commendable and the influence of ethical principles helped, for the *adat* proponents appeared to be more sympathetic to Indonesian discourse of law, and more knowledgeable about local cultures, than those who favored unification (Lev, 1985). However, Van Vollenhoven reduced the comprehensive aspect of *adat*, especially in matters relating to religious dimensions. He only sees *adat* in the view of Law that contains sanctions. While reducing *adat* in relation to the noble beliefs and

traditions of the community at that time. Van Vollenhoven's opinions were based on the concept of Western law, where anyone who violates order or law will be sanctioned. The strong influence of Van Vollenhoven which constructs *adat* was basically also a continuation of the mission of the modern state which threatens local history, imagination and law. Above all, according to Burns, this Dutch colonial policy project had an interest in making customary law in order to conquer the kings of the archipelago at that time (Burns, 1989; Lev, 1985).

The essentialization of *Adat* Law looks at the position of customary rights, namely the legal dimension relating to *Adat* Law. This term was known as *beschikkingsrecht* from Van Vollenhoven and his student Ter Haar (Haar, 1962). This term later emerged as an important part of the talk about *Adat* Law and agrarian law. Separation of religion from *adat* deserves to be traced from colonial times. The dominant perspective that sees *adat* as different from religion gives birth to a twofold consequence. First, it created a new category, "tradition" which previously did not contradict the category of "religion" but was caused by "administration", with reference to that which came under the authority of the colonial state. Second, the explanation above has shown that the first impact of *adat* after being reduced by missionaries was that *adat* will become an old and primitive tradition. It separates *adat* from the nature of its religiosity. *Adat meaning* as the traditional practices that are different from this category of religion, considered as animism. Subsequently, when *adat* becomes a habit, essentially, this habit was reduced again as an old habit. Then, by itself *adat* refers to *Adat* Law that was contrary to religious law.

At this time, the *adat* construction, which increasingly alienated religion in the *adat* category under Dutch Ethical Policy, was mutually related. By strengthening the position of *Adat* Law for the non-Islamic peoples among whom the missions had been granted permission to work, the government worked against mission efforts at religious conversion, since these peoples made no distinction between two. This left the missions with two options: the first, to oppose the policy of indirect rule through indigenous *adat*, would have meant an untenable alliance with Islam. The second option was to embrace *adat* studies as means of defining religion in the East Indies social formation. This second option was adopted by the Ethical Theologians who utilized secular liberal social sciences in the service of missions. Their ethnographic work took place within the common framework established by *Adat* Law studies (Schrauwens, 2000).

By the time the Dutch scholars were involved in the project of religion, many cosmological concepts of Indigenous people such as knowledge, rituals,

practices, spiritualism had been declined. The modernization project of the colonial era that aimed at economic reform, political organization, and rural electrification set the dominant conditions within official religion. Likewise, the colonial construction of the discourse of *adat* was in the colonial interests; it also was conducted for the effectiveness of the colonial administration (Burns, 1989; Lev, 1985). By the time the colonial administrators and Dutch scholars were involved in the interest of *Adat* Law, many traditional centers of power such as courts of kings/ sultans and palaces of port-city princes had ceased to function as seats of government and places of rule-enforcement (Burns, 1989).

### ISLAMIC IDENTITY AND THE IMPACT OF SEPARATION BETWEEN ADAT AND RELIGION

Many scholars have contributed to the debate on the notion of *adat* and Islam both normatively and empirically (Abdullah, 1966; Bowen, 1988; Bräuchler, 2010; Budiwanti, 2013; Hanami, 2002; Prins, 1951; Srimulyani, 2010; Yakin, 2014). As a practice, *adat* and Islam as also *adat* and religion are not problematized by people. However, politically speaking, *adat* become more contested in the sense of how rulers perceive Muslim people according to what they practice. This appeared at the beginning of the rise of the politics of religious identity which was used to drive away colonial forces in the early 1800's. Generally, this movement appeared from traditional circles who came from rural communities (Abdullah, 1970; Dobbin, 1977). They sometimes live in non-elite circles. However, they grew up outside the structure of the power elite at that time. They appear as a movement that oppresses local groups which assumed conspiracies to foreign rulers. On the other hand, colonial policies which exploit the natives led them to hang over the new power. Such a movement gradually rose grassroots at that time until the emergence of the early Islamic revival movement.

In the mid-19th century, such movements emerged in the modern period of Indonesia and subsequently became the new people's power against colonialism in several regions in Indonesia. In Sumatra, the Padri War (1821-1838) become a momentum for the contestation between Islam and *adat*. The influence of the Padri War in religion and *adat* in the life of the people in West Sumatra was marked by a restructuring of *adat* and religious governments. The separation between *adat* and religious governments at this time was increasing. According to Benda Beckmann ``religious official, who formerly had been embedded in the organization of the matriclans, were gradually detached the *nagari* gradually detached from the matriclans and become religious officials

of the mosques” (Benda-Beckmann and Benda-Beckmann, 2013). During the period of the struggle for independence, from 1945 to 1949, power within the *nagari* shifted again from the *adat* leaders, who had become an essential part of the colonial administrative system, to men primarily belonging to religious parties. The Dutch had previously excluded these leaders from exercising any real political or administrative authority within their communities (Kahin, 1985).

Following this, the strengthening of Islamic identity as part of the forces against colonialism, confirmed the new movement of the people which brought Islamic orthodoxy. In consequence, Dutch administrators consider Islam as a threat to colonial power. Dutch colonists responded through many efforts. In the early 20th century, the Dutch colonialists issued a policy separating Islam and *adat*. Political reasons behind the policy was to respond to rebellions of militant Muslims, based on the advice of Christian Snouck Hurgronje. Hurgronje contributed to constructing a mutual relationship with the Muslim society at that time. Based on his research of Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca, Hurgronje concludes that religion should be separate from *adat*. In his recommendation, Hurgronje stated the threat is not Islam as a religion, but Islam as a political doctrine, both in the form of agitation of local fanatics and in the form of Pan-Islam (Benda, 1958a). As a result of this, Dutch government issued the order to provoke the separation between Islam as political and *adat* as communal force. Subsequently, the community was polarized between Islamic or religious groups and indigenous or *adat* groups. This separation increasingly influenced people’s discourse in the community between *adat* and religion. This led to strong social tensions in the community between Islamic groups and *adat* groups. However, Hurgronje should be appreciated for his effort to provide religious freedom to adhere to people’s respective religions. Hurgronje suggested the colonial policy to promote access to education to local communities. Especially religious education (Maarif, 2012). The so-called “the twin politics” of tolerance and hostility finally had to go hand in hand with Dutch assistance to, and Dutch support for social elements. These elements were little under the influence of Islamic fanaticism, *adat* leaders and rulers outside Java, and the *Priyayi* elite in Java.

The emergence of religious-based institutions participated in responding to the birth of religious contestation in the public sphere in Indonesia. In the early 20th century, Western education developed, but so did modern religious schools (Kato, 1982). At this time, the spirit of Dutch Ethical Policy that provided an opportunity for the establishment of religious education, had an impact on efforts to mainstream religion in the country’s dominant

practices at that time. This opportunity was well utilized by Islamic scholars to introduce Islam as a strict law and rule. Thus, gradually the community has been able to distinguish which are considered as pure Islamic rules or not. Until the beginning of the 20th century, these strict views encouraged the purification of cases that were considered as custom or “un-Islamic” such as indigenous festivals, visits, homage, preparation of food, and more (Feillard, 2011). Religious communities with a modern, orthodox and puritan religious orientation generally consider *adat* as a cultural tradition that could contaminate the pure religion, but religious communities that have traditional-contextual religious orientations tend to accept *adat* not contradictory to the principles of religious teachings. *Adat* enriches religions (Maarif, 2017a; Ropi, 2017). Such polarization strengthens and impacts many social aspects of Indonesian people in general.

In this regard, the dominant discourse of Islam also impacts on other dominant religion such as Christianity. To follow this, it can be relatively considered that Islam and Christianity are the two religions that dominated the population of Indonesia in this early foundational period. These non-religious citizens who were *adat* people became the target of Islamization and also Christian missionaries (Hefner and Horvath, 1997). The contestation of the traditional and modernist groups on religious discourse in this period has increasingly marginalized *adat*. This also led to Islam and Christianity becoming more powerful than *adat* in practice. Thus, these new ideas and teachings dominate the discourse about religion, while *adat* was seen merely as an antiquated element or tradition. When religion dominantly colored the contestation between religious groups, many religious institutions emerged at that time. According to Deliar Noer, the establishment of some modernist Islamic organizations such as Serikat Islam and Muhammadiyah indicated this. On the other hand, as a reaction to the emergence of the Islamic modernist movement, several new organizations were established, such as the Nahdlatul Ulama (Noer, 1982). Deliar Noer also identified several symptoms of the dominance of the Islamists represented by Modernist Islam and Traditionalist Islam (Noer, 1982). Furthermore, it seems to me that such a polarization is between Islam as a religious organization and *adat* as an indigenous organization. Here, the establishment of these religious organizations is essentially as a response to *adat* as traditional institution at that time.

I argue that the presence of socio-religious movements in this period targeted indigenous people. Islamic circles that did not have access to political action resulted in the concentration of religious movements that were more focused on the process of Islamization than against the colonial resistance. Here,

Ricklefs identifies several efforts from mainstream Islamic organizations such as those played by Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama who play a role in the Islamization process (Ricklefs, 2012). These organizations were born as a manifestation of religious revival in the space of Indonesian civil society. To some extent, this movement has its own characteristics in their background. In 1912, Muhammadiyah which was called the reformist movement was a group that attempted to purify previous religious heritages such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and all practices that are considered pre-Islamic. At the same time, it also emerged as a reaction to the spirit of Christianization targeting the group (Shihab, 1998). At the same time, the Reformists also proposed to abandon the medieval schools of law (*mazhab*), mastered by only a few learned scholars. For the latter, Nahdlatul Ulama was established not directly as a form of reaction to western colonialism, but rather, a form of reaction to the ulama movement. In other words, as a reaction to attacks on the *mazhab*, in 1926, the non-Reformist ulama which was Nahdlatul Ulama created their own organization (Feillard, 2011). As a matter of fact, although it was recognized that these two organizations have different attitudes towards local cultures where traditionalists are considered more accommodative towards local culture, the establishment of the traditionalist in responding to pre-Islamic traditions was still based on Islamic exclusivity.

Based on this backdrop, strengthening the separation of religion from *adat* was not only caused by external factors, such as the colonists aim to modernize indigenous people, but also the role of local actors who contribute to perpetuate the dominant discourse on religious mainstream (Yamin et.al, 2019). This can be seen from the process of Islamization and Christianization carried out by certain groups and organizations that emerged before independence. Referring to this pattern of Dutch Colonial Policy, it can be concluded that religious movement as an religious activity has been supported by the colonial.

Following the colonial period, there was the Japanese occupation which held a different policy towards religion. Dutch politics related to religious issues was inversely proportional to the Japanese policies on religion in that period. Japanese policies were characterized by a more certain policy of *divide et impera* which results in limited redistribution. Japan provided freer access to the realization of Islamic politics at this time. Japan had no doubts about increasing the position of Islam and giving social prestige and implicitly political prestige to its spokespersons in Java, as was the case everywhere in Indonesia. Finally, Islam became so strong. Japanese policies that organized the period and strength of the educated people at that time became an opportunity for Muslims to take part in formulating state policies (Benda, 1958b).



The rise of religious organizations further strengthened identity politics at this time. The impact of Japanese politics then gave an opportunity to build affiliation with Islamic and urban leaders again. In the early years of Japanese rule, Masyumi stood as an Islamic organization that was allowed to maintain its identity. I argue these Islamic organizations have had an important role in making policies related to Islamic issues on the island of Java. The discourse about the dominance of religion at this time was getting stronger. The climax was that, towards the time of independence, these religious leaders were increasingly trying to influence the formulation of laws and state constitutions.

The essential category between religion and non-religion dominantly continues to influence State policy. With many regulations on religions, the tension between people who claim to be followers of local traditions increasingly loses its religious dimensions. They continue to be the subject of hegemony in the name of the dominant religion. Religion is a very formal, prescriptive, and normative concept. Consequently, state politics began to distinguish between religious and non-religious groups. The emergence of these dominant authorities tries to classify and categorize what is included with *adat* and not. Religion as an identity strengthened in the period leading up to Indonesian independence. While *Adat* became an important attention from the government policies on legal and cultural aspects, the religious dimension of *Adat* was increasingly marginalized, especially with the issues of many laws governing religion for the citizens. Religion at this time was based on religion in a theological sense that made Islam and Christianity as the standard (Maarif, 2017a). As a result of this, the purification movement flourished in the community. This was followed by the coming of Islamic organizations. Religion began to be discussed specifically in some Indonesian constitutional literature. Religion has become a national issue. Compared to *Adat*, the discourse of religion is more dominant.

## CONCLUSION

The construction of *Adat* in colonial Indonesia appeared as an initial attempt that degraded the scope of the meaning of *adat* as secular and unfulfilling of requirements necessary to be a religion. Discursively, *adat* in the colonial period also showed that the concept of *adat* is constantly developing. *Adat* began as a marker of the intervention of many powers which subsequently disposed of religious aspects of practices of *adat* people. The construction of Dutch Colonial Administrators regarding *adat* (different from those that developed in the community) illustrate that *adat* was an animist culture that needed to be transformed into religion and modernized. That was the

beginning of the idea of the separation between people practices including *adat* which is regarded as an 'old' traditional practice. Colonialism tried to govern the people through policies.

The idea of modernity as the root of western colonialism penetrated into many aspects of life for the people. For example, there were policies such as Liberal Policy and Ethical Policy that initiated the idea of universalizing the western concept of religion for the people in the colonies. In particular, the world religion paradigm which was the dominant idea, used to define the practice of the people and asking for *adat* to be modernized. That was because of the emerging idea of animism which regards *adat* as primitive, tribal, and uncivilized. On one hand, *adat* is supposed in terms of customary laws. Under the influence of the world religious paradigm, many colonial administrators consider *adat* peoples as an object to be developed in terms of modernity. In a political aspect, *adat* became the arena of power contestation used by various levels of power, including the Dutch Colonial Administrators, local elite, and dominant society to perpetuate its power in their circles. In the context of Islam, *adat* is considered different from Islam. *Adat* is regarded as an old tradition that was inherently socially embedded before Islam. So, at this time, Islam was always opposed to *adat*.

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